

“WHEN TWO SHALL BE ONE”

GLIMPSES OF CONCEALED DOCTRINE

FOREWORD

This essay will treat, in four progressive sections, of a subject to-day engaging the minds of many mystical thinkers, though it is one of which, after all, little can be said openly—the mystery of the division and reunion of human sex. We know that in recent years a silent revolution has been proceeding in which the position of women in regard to education, industry, and other social relations has been shifted forwards and is still being advanced. The long day of the “subjection of women” is past and has given place to one in which feminine capacities are being accorded a value complementary to those of men. Now this phenomenon has its inward side; it is, though few recognise the fact, the outward expression of an interior spiritual activity at work behind the scenes of physical life. Even the female-suffrage movement is a phase of one loud cry for self-expression raised by the repressed soul of a section of humanity; and, although in few cases perhaps has the fact so presented itself in the formal consciousness, the claim for certain privileges in the kingdoms of this world (the merits of which privileges need not be discussed here) is at bottom a subconscious assertion of rights in the Kingdom of Heaven. The outward phenomenon has therefore great significance for those who discern the outworking of spiritual forces in the plane of physical life and through human beings—the true medium for manifesting the energies of the Divine Spirit.

But beyond the more general, crude, and secular

forms in which those energies are becoming expressed, a change has been taking place subtly and silently in the sphere of religious life. Where once existed, whether within or without Christendom, an implied distinction between the sexes in spiritual matters—indicated outwardly by their being separately allocated in places of public worship—there now exists equality of status and there is recognised a community of needs and rights. But, to go much farther than this, a notable fact of more recent religious history has been the active co-operation of persons of opposite sex in the mystical work of spiritual self-development. Up to roughly two hundred years ago those who are regarded as the great classical Christian mystics, whether men or women, achieved their marvellous heights of spiritual life and God-consciousness under conditions of sexual separation, and usually in the monastery or in the convent, as the case might be. Their long line terminated in the sixteenth century in two contemporaries—St Juan de la Cruz upon the male, and St Teresa upon the female, side. Within a hundred years one finds the inception of a novel mystical method—the spectacle of a *concerted* effort to realise God. The outstanding instances are, within the Roman Church though under its official censure, Madame Guyon and Archbishop Fénelon, and, in the more liberal Protestant community, their coevals Jane Lead and Dr John Pordage. The case of the former pair is more notorious than that of the latter; but their environment obstructed the development of their joint efforts, and ecclesiastical persecution made impossible the bequest of any full memorial thereof. The work of the latter pair, however, resulted in an abundance of literary records indicating the value of their labours, the profundity of their spiritual research, and the richness of the graces they experienced; but as these remains have not been reprinted since their first issue two centuries ago, they are less known than they deserve to be and are almost inaccessible. Coming to more recent years, one recalls also the combination of Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland, whose work, whilst endowed in its own

degree with merits that have proved of large advantage to many truth-seekers, can however scarcely be classed for depth and richness with that of their predecessors just referred to. Other less or more notorious instances of collaboration in spiritual unfolding will suggest themselves, whilst examples of such in private life will be known to perhaps all who have been brought within the current of the mystical movement of to-day.

Now what do these things portend? Well, at the root, they are symptoms of a new spiritual growth in humanity. They are the spiritual phase of an energy which in its secular expression has manifested in the advance of woman to a position in social affairs abreast of man. To suggest that a connection subsists between the offence of Mother Eve which resulted in the fall of humanity from Paradise, and, say, the present woman's suffrage movement, may appear at first sight startling. But the connection is not wanting, and it is a direct and vital one. It was woman, or rather the intuitional quality in humanity, with which woman is more abundantly endowed, that, as the biblical myth relates, first succumbed to a test of spiritual capacity and fell, involving with herself the ruin of her male and more intellectual counterpart. It has been she who, as the consequence and in expiation of that fall, has undergone the world-old position of subordination to which notoriously she has been subjected. But it is within the law and the predestined order of things that she also it is and will be who, when the due period of subordination is past—and the day is at hand—will not only once more come abreast of her fellow-man, but shall take the lead in restoring both him and herself to the position from which she first contributed to their joint fall. And hereon let me cite the far-seeing thought of an obscure but richly illumined mystic—Robert Roach—who, in 1725, wrote of the movement of which we are speaking and of which he saw the inception:—"The female indeed was first in the transgression and drew the male into the Fall with her. But this disgrace has been more than retrieved and the injury repaired in a far greater blessing derived to all mankind for the

restoration of all, through the womb of the Blessed Virgin. And in yet farther reparation, the female sex, as commissioned and entrusted by their Mother Wisdom, will act the *reverse* to their former temptation, and will now tempt and draw the male *upwards*, in order to the recovery of Paradise again even on earth, and that in a far more glorious state than that from whence they fell."

Hence, in the midway of the world's history, and in the ripeness of time, to a pure woman was granted the birth of a Saviour, and to a purified woman was accorded the first sight of the risen Lord. The potent feminine virtues of love and spiritual intuition then received a recognition that has yet to be widely exemplified among other daughters of Eve, who, like the Magdalene, will "come and tell" certain men that they "have seen the Lord and that He has spoken things unto them." These qualities so emphasised in woman are complementary to the intellective and forceful properties predominant in man, but in individuals in whom these now unbalanced attributes become equipoised there would be generated a character akin to the Christ-nature portrayed in the Gospels, in which the highest virtues of both sexes co-exist. "There-out came blood and water" when the sacred heart was pierced; by which symbolic language is implied that not only in the Lord's person were blended the two-fold essences that in their severance distinguish male and female natures, but that therefrom, for the salvation of humanity, there became liberated a dual tincture, by appropriating which the severed natures of man and woman might once more be unified and give birth to characters similar to His own. And this tincture is the spiritual force now manifesting itself and permeating many amongst us to-day. It is the energy silently operative behind the various phases of the modern feminist movement; that is levelling the sexes, stimulating feminine thought and energy in unprecedented ways, and linking many men and women together for the purpose of the mystic quest.

With this premised, we proceed to our subject. But

since, as approached from a biblical standpoint, there is interconnected with it a secondary question, involving a point in what many may deem the hopelessly impractical and profitless subject of angelology, it is necessary to deal with the latter first.

I

The Gnosis, or Secret Theology, of which in its Christianised form (for of course there are others) the Dionysian writings are a partial exposition, affirms that between Deity and man there intervene no less than nine orders of celestial beings. Of these hierarchies of the heavens the least—although the state of even these exceeds the grasp of the physically limited mind—are those of the Angels and Archangels. At the other end of the majestic scale subsist, in inconceivable transcendence and in the immediate precincts of the supernal Holy Family, the Seraphim, the Cherubim, and the Thrones. Using simple words to describe conditions surpassing human speech, the Seraphim are individuated essences or centres of purest love; reflexes of Deity considered as Love. Regarded as activities they are engaged, as the *Te Deum* hymn affirms, in the perpetual, exclusive adoration of the supreme mystery of love as exhibited by the Godhead; in their passive aspect they serve as media for transmitting that love into lower hierarchies and remoter planes of being.

The Cherubim are similarly individuated essences or centres, similarly occupied; but are distinctified from their Seraphic brethren by the fact that they are reflexes of the divine Love as conjoined with divine Wisdom, a marriage of qualities in God which gives birth to the divine Power, of which in turn the Thrones are the reflex emanations. Thus the triple chief aspects of the Trinity are reflected in a supreme angelic triad. And as the triune Father of spirits manifests still more outwardly—from an abyssal centre of ineffable love, wisdom, and power in union, towards the distant physical circumference wherein man now abides,—He veils Himself at

each successive stage of unfoldment with other creatures displaying other attributes appropriate to the degree of manifestation. Hence in the angelology of the Secret Tradition the Seraphim are spoken of as those celestial beings who most fiercely and undividedly love, and the Cherubim as those who are most supremely wise and conscious of the motive and purpose of that love; for love must be tempered with wisdom before irradiating the inferior hierarchies and outer worlds whose imperfect denizens are incapable of appreciating the Divine Nature in its fulness.

And hence it was—and the point is purposely elaborated here because of its bearing upon what is to follow—that in the Mosaic allegory of the extrusion of man from Paradise for an offence that violated the central and supreme mystery of love, it is recorded that it was to Cherubim—not to Seraphim or any other order of angelic life—that thenceforward was entrusted the safe-keeping of the way of the Tree of Life until such time as that offence should be expiated. The duty fell to those who, reflecting as they do the perfect marriage-union of Love and Wisdom, could best discern when and to whom the privilege of sharing that spectacle might safely be restored. "He placed at the east of the garden of Eden *Cherubims*,¹ and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the Tree of Life."

Verily man knows the Tree of Life—the abyssal, truncal, many-branching source of all vitality—to be guarded, how closely! Consider the amazing multitudinous forces ranged between man at the periphery of life and Deity subsistent at the heart of all. Not only Angels, Archangels, Principalities—these in their legions are but the pickets and outposts of Jehovah Tzabaoth, Lord of Hosts. Behind these are ranked the Powers, the Might, the Dominions, a triad of hierarchies utterly transcending those below them and discharging distinctive offices of their own. Lastly, rear-guard of all about the most holy place, the great companies of the Thrones, the Cherubim and the Seraphim of whom we have spoken. But consider further this—it is

¹ The word means "images"; reflexes of Deity.

the complementary thought to that of these stupendous cohorts,—that man has been set for the present a little lower than the least of the angels that in the consummation of his destiny he may be crowned with a glory and worthship above them all. For transcending human conception as now they do, majestic as are their powers and sublime their condition, in one qualification and one privilege that we their puny brethren and fellow-servants possess they are lacking—the experience of having tabernacled in mortal flesh and of undergoing that most crucial ordeal of all, life in a world of mixed good and evil and the limitations of an existence spent at the very periphery and remotest outworks of creation. All privileges but this are theirs; “Son, thou art ever with Me, and all that I have is thine”; but their creation took place before that of man, and it was beyond the compass of their destiny to undertake the journey that man has made into the “far country” of physical life and from its outer darkness to be restored after many days to the heart of heaven. In Spenser’s great verse—

How oft do they their silver bowers leave
To come to succour us that succour want;
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
The flitting skies, like flying pursuivant,
Against foul fiends to aid us militant!
They for us fight; they for us watch and ward.
And their bright squadrons round about us plant,
And all for love, and nothing for reward,

—but personal knowledge of good and evil, the enigma of sin and love, the mystery of man—and of woman, the restoration of a fallen race out of the chaos which has been into the cosmos which is yet to be—these with prescient and adoring gaze they contemplate; towards the fulfilment of them they serve as ministers of those who alone are called “heirs of salvation.” But these matters are beyond their personal participation; they are “things which the angels desire to look into” but cannot themselves experience.

So, then, the drama of human exile, which in one of its hidden aspects we are about to follow up, begins in the

Scriptures thus:—“He drove out the man, and He placed Cherubims, and a flaming sword that turned every way, to keep the way of the Tree of Life.” Yet when a Raphael portrays, as in the Sistine Madonna, his idea of these great sentinels of inmost heaven, how comes it that he paints for us only naked, chubby babies; or that a Shakespeare describes them as “the young-eyed Cherubim”? For the good reason that the enlightened perception of these great minds recognised blended love and wisdom, of which the Cherubim are the embodiments, to be at once the most formidable of forces when opposed by impurity, imperfection, and foolishness, and the most childlike, tractable qualities when a like spirit is exhibited towards them. The flaming sword, two-edged with love and wrath, that turneth every way through the height, depth, and breadth of the manifested universe, and that permeates all matter—for in one of its aspects it is the astral fire latent in the cosmic electric ether that underlies that matter—drops from the potent grasp of the guardians of the way of the Tree of Life at the advent of the pure, loving, and wise of heart, whose access to the paradise of God is no longer barred, but is greeted by childlike angels, young-eyed as human babes before the smirch of the world has dimmed and constricted their sight, and wise from perpetually gazing upon the mysteries of that kingdom into which it is written that only little children can enter.

II

We pass forth now from the celestial courts and the genesis of things to this outer imperfect plane of shadows, hints, and symbols of Reality wherein humanity is exiled and whence it is called to make its exodus. The first impressive spectacle of the Cherubim offered to our reflection in the Scriptures, and which we have just considered, is succeeded by another—how few readers or expositors discern the purposed, faithful, and significant contrast!—in which those tremendous ministers of power are exhibited in their precisely opposite aspect, and

in a posture of defencelessness, humility, and enraptured contemplation.

"Two Cherubim, of gold, of beaten work," covering the Mercy-seat with uplifted wings, and with faces looking one towards the other,—such were the appointed adornment of the Mosaic Ark of the Covenant, that most cherished and profoundly sacramental of all the ritualistic appointments of Israel, whether during their nomadic wilderness-sojourn, with a portable shrine as their centre of worship, or when firmly established in Palestine with the metropolitan temple of Solomon as the focus-point of national religion. It was but a piece of ecclesiastical furniture, but in Jewry the Ark filled a place and bore a significance analogous to that originally accorded in Christendom to the Cross—a significance extremely profound to those instructed in the symbolism involved. And since, as has been said already, the whole thesis of our Scriptures proceeds upon the axiom that humanity's present exile from its native home was due to its having profaned the central mystery of love—a mystery of which thenceforward Cherubim became the designated wardens,—it is natural and wholly congruous that in that part of the symbolic earthly tabernacle which, in correspondence with the inmost sanctuary of heaven was called "the holiest place of all," images of those same high ministers should be reproduced and be represented in the act of contemplating the self-same mystery and the means by which its desecration could be expiated and repaired.

And this brings us to considering the nature of man. As represented in the biblical account of the Fall, the offending man and woman were the divided halves, the separated poles, of what was originally created an androgynous unity. "In the beginning" there was no sex. "Man" stood perfect and self-contained, with the dual attributes of male and female in him; and, notwithstanding the subsequent fission that resulted in the manifestation of sex, we have St Paul's authority that in the Divine Thought the man is still not without the woman nor the woman without the man, but that both are one, and capable of again becoming one, in

Christ; in other words, each sex-half is incomplete without its complement, but is capable of having that complement restored into vital relation with itself.

From this there follows a conclusion—which for good reasons has not been suffered to become explicit doctrine in public religion—that whatever measure of personal sanctity, of regeneracy of soul, or illumination of spirit, be attained by any fragmentary sex-half in the person of an isolated man or woman, there continues to be lacking that supreme reintegration into the divine image and male-female condition in which prototypal man was made unless, to continue the biblical figure, the rib once withdrawn from Adam's side be restored to its place. The term "rib" is of course but figurative. As, physiologically, bone is but flesh-tissue consolidated to a degree necessary to support the rest of the organism, so what is here spoken of mystically as bone implies a strongly concentrated spiritual essence needful to the structure of perfectly integrated man. And that "rib" was withdrawn and given a separated existence, be it remembered, in sleep; that is, during the spiritual inactivity and coma of the undeveloped, inexperienced soul ere that soul went forth in a divided state upon its needful journey to gain self-knowledge and perform self-sacrifice, in fulfilling which is summed up the whole purpose of severance from its source. But the *re-instatement* of the "rib" must take place in a condition of awakeness and in full activity of consciousness, so that man may re-enter his lost paradise whole and undivided, and there, with full comprehension of good and evil and bitter experience of separation, reattain joyous union with his God and resume his heritage and similitude to the Deity in whose male-and-female image he was first designed.

Conformably with this basal truth, the Cherubim superimposed upon the Ark of the Covenant were twain, for that which is above is as that which is below. Not that it is necessary to predicate sex, as such, of those with whom sex is non-existent and who dwell where there is neither marriage nor giving in marriage in any earthly sense; but because duality is the inevitable

mode of manifestation of whatsoever issues from the primal Unity, which cannot become externalised otherwise than by employing contrasts or "pairs of opposites," and so emerges into outward life in apparently conflicting relations, such as good and evil, light and darkness, positive and negative, male and female. But just as it is in the synthesis and re-union of these temporarily severed opposites—as when, from contrary poles, the divided halves of electric current leap to union in a light-flash—that the duality becomes resolved again into unity, so also, as the symbolism of the Ark denoted, between the pair of contemplative angels, and, as it were, as the result of the impact of their yearning thought-waves, it was promised that the Divine Light would blaze forth above the Mercy-seat and that in the moment of perfect union of the two beings there should be manifested the presence of "Him who dwelleth between the Cherubims."

So was earnest given of the fulfilment of the great compact with man, "My covenant shall be with your flesh," a covenant that will ever be fulfilled in the supreme marriage-hour of those whose affinitised spirits, souls, and flesh have been so joined together as to form the perfect Shechinah and to be living instruments for the manifestation of the Divine Presence.

In this connection were uttered those *logia* of the Lord happily preserved to us by St Clement of Rome, the Gospel of the Egyptians and the Oxyrhyncine fragments. Asked when His kingdom should come and when He would manifest Himself to His disciples, the Lord said:—"When two shall be one; the outside as the inside; the male with the female—neither male nor female: when ye trample upon the garment of shame; when ye shall be stripped and not be ashamed." In these words, read in association with their complementary passages in the Mosaic text and with the mystical significance of the Ark of the Covenant, is to be found by those who search truly and deeply enough the secret key to the reparation of the primal offence against the most holy Love. The Cross, which in Christendom superseded the Ark as the chief religious

emblem, and which, like the Ark, is still displayed in sanctuaries that are duly appointed, conceals, though even more hiddenly, the same secret; it is the symbol of a perfect conjunction and poise of opposites, which opposites, as manifested in human sex, attain that balance when the conditions named in the Lord's *logia* have been fulfilled. The same truth is still further expressed in the *Cross Ansata*, the chief symbol of many pre-Christian systems, and one still worn as a eucharistic vestment where catholic ritual is observed, although few of those who wear it could give, and many would be surprised at learning, the real significance of the maniple and the reason for its display. Originally it testified that he who wore it held the knowledge of that of which it has been often said that he who possesses it holds the key of all things—the mystery of sex. In the Greater Mysteries of antiquity this was the final, culminating secret knowledge to be disclosed, and was imparted only to those regenerated ones who, like Abraham, had "rejoiced to see My day"—had attained the Christ-state—before Christ came in the flesh.

But to return. Within the Ark of the Covenant, in the dark cavity beneath the Mercy-seat and contemplative Cherubim, were deposited certain hallows—the subject of their contemplation. The symbolic purport of these stands, therefore, in direct relation to the golden figures surmounting them, who, as it were, are voicing certain canons of spiritual science—"as above, so below"; in the dead earth must that be done which is done perpetually in the living heaven; "the outside as the inside."

Now the Ark was not, as the word's more modern meaning might suggest, a mere repository-chest or coffer for holding certain relics. This chief and central content of the Hebrew sanctuary was, as the word's root implies, a veritable *arche*-type; an arch-symbol embodying the very profundity of truth. It was coffer, coffin, and symbol at once. As such, it stands by no means alone. In instituting it, Moses, learned in the secret wisdom of the older Egyptian Mysteries, was perpetuating the Ark of Osiris; the sepulchral chest

in which Isis collected from the regenerative waters of the symbolic Nile the Typhon-slain members of her divine husband-brother, from which tomb this pre-Christian Christ rose in triumphant resurrection. It connects also with the Ark of Noah and with the ship in which the *Argonauts* of the Greek religious myth undertook their symbolic quest.

The hallows deposited within the Ark of the Covenant were, testifies the Epistle to the Hebrews, three in number: the two tables of the Mosaic Law (or "the Testimony"), Aaron's rod that budded and bore fruit, and the golden pot of manna. If there be, as indeed there is, a conflict of statement between the writer of the Epistle and the authors of the books of Kings (I, ch. viii. 9) and Chronicles (2, ch. v. 10), who record, with an emphasis that is obviously deliberate and purposeful, that "there was nothing in the Ark save the two tables of stone," the contradiction is one of words only and not of ideas. It will not offend those who penetrate the symbolism, since what is described in the earlier books involves also, in point of symbolism, the additional objects mentioned in the later work. The matter cannot be explicated here; indeed it has never been publicly written of in English; it lies beyond the purview of academic theology and the conventional commentaries; but a guarded reference to it may be found by the discerning in the great Hebrew *Sepher-ha-Zohar* where the Kabbalists treat of it in connection with something cryptically called "the Foundation" of all things. For in the symbolic outward temple of Jewry the Ark rested in that place which significantly enough was "behind the second veil" and was designated *Sanctum Sanctorum*, "the holiest place of all," entered but once a year, at the autumnal equinox, and then only by the high-priest clad in the most eloquently emblematic of vestments. Behind a twofold veil lies also the significance of the contents of the Ark.

If, essaying to raise the first of these veils, one should surmise that, in the connection of which we are speaking, the two tables of the testimony refer to that ordinance of God which, beyond all literal observance, must be

kept utterly in spirit and in truth by those who aspire that the kingdom should become manifest in them, he will not err. If he see in the flowering rod of Aaron an emblem of the magical and all-potent spiritual will of man which in its Godward exercise will also blossom and fructify, he reads aright. And if he interpret the golden jar of manna as the unfailing Bread of Heaven that feeds those who hunger for the Lord's Body, he need not be gainsaid. His assumptions will be just, and, should the desire of his heart coincide therewith and the energy of his will reduce them into experience, he will not fail of reward even though he fail to realise the unexhausted residue of this specially profound symbolism. But since the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews asserts that of the full significance of these things he "cannot speak particularly" in a public document; and since Origen deemed it prudent in his anti-Celsian tractate (Bk. vi. 18) to state that "the Cherubim upon which God is said to be borne are mentioned in a very mysterious manner on account of the unworthy and indecent who are unable to enter into the great thoughts and venerable nature of theology, and I have not deemed it becoming to discourse of them in this treatise"; and since, a thousand years later, another great Doctor of Christendom, St Thomas Aquinas, has affirmed that the vital import of the contents of the Ark of the Covenant can never be imparted except secretly and to those far advanced in holiness, it is not for lesser hands to raise the second veil. The subject is best left to the understanding of those who have an ear to hear what the Spirit says to its own "churches"—the pure and simply-minded to whom in the heart's quietness the deeper secrets of the sanctuary are revealed.

III

Catholic doctrine upon the vital theme of man's restoration into the Divine image we know always to have been in the world; symbols and sacramental

forms embodying it have been instituted in varying ways in different religions by illuminated teachers and prophets "which have been since the world began." As already said, the symbol of the cross long antedated that of Christ, and in the Mosaic Ark was reproduced the fundamental doctrine of the religion of Osiris. When, after long centuries of vigour, the latter great system grew effete and corrupt, the stewardship of the mysteries was withdrawn from the land of the Nile and entrusted to the Hebrew priesthood; as it is written, "Out of Egypt have I called my son." And when in turn the divine doctrine became rendered of no effect by the traditions of official Jewry, that stewardship passed into other hands out of which developed the Christian *Ecclesia*. In what manner, then, did the sacramental purport of the Ark of the Covenant reappear in Christian symbolism? for it would be surprising if an emblem and a doctrine of such supreme significance failed to recur in a system instituted not to destroy, but to extend and fulfil, that which anteceded it.

I have said already that the Christian cross or crucifix absorbed and re-expressed the symbolism of the Ark. The fact may not readily appear to those who accord to the crucifix only the morbid ideas that have grown around it since the time when the Christian mysteries lost their primal freshness and joyousness beneath the influence of Latin theology and officialism. Time was when the crucifix was regarded by the instructed not as the over-emphasised spectacle of physical suffering and death it afterwards became and still remains, but, like the Ark of the Covenant before it, as "the great cosmic love-scene"; the token of the resolution of all antinomies, whether macrocosmic or microcosmic, of the harmonisation of all opposites, and of the re-integration of humanity in God through the single, repairing energy of love.

But the cross was not the sole method of re-expression. There remains another, one intended to be patent to those who would read the Gospel-pageant with spiritual discernment, but one whose delicacy passes unobserved

by the multitude and whose subtlety and unobtrusive sublimity elude the heavy eyes of the professional scholiasts. It is to be found in the superb and glowing passage where, in simplest words, the great Kabbalist who composed the fourth Gospel relates how the Magdalene visited the Lord's sepulchre "and seeth two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain."

The same spectacle is here, is it not, as that offered to the mind of Jewry when it contemplated the sepulchral coffer overshadowed by a pair of golden angels that rested within their sanctuary's most holy place?—yet how sublimed and transfigured, as the Gospel never fails to exalt and fulfil the Law! We have reverted now from a mere symbolic object to a dramatic portrayal of actual life. A mute image has been displaced by a vivid reality. For a pair of metal figures we are greeted by two radiant, breathing beings; they are "sitting" now; at rest, their long watch over; the flaming sword relinquished. The artificial mortuary-chest has become transformed into a tomb hewn in the bed-rock of mother-earth herself; must not the great Transmuter descend into, disinfect, and arise from the densest kingdom of a world Himself has made? And the encoffined hallows of the Mosaic ordinance—the tables of testimony, the wand, and manna-pot—these too have suffered a magic change. Veils they were and, like "the linen clothes lying," vestures they remain; the spirit that informed them is "not here, but risen"; the living sense has been extracted from the dead emblems. Whilst over and through all, the more inevitable because invisible, a Presence—in whom the letter and bondage of the law have been transmuted into the liberty of the spirit; in whom Aaron's snake-devouring wand has become the Rod of Jesse that absorbs into itself the serpent-brood of sins of the world; and through whom the little vessel of casual wilderness-manna has superabundantly increased and become henceforth for all the cosmic and perpetual Bread of Life.

And not Bread only, but Bread and Wine. The

added element creates a duality of essential significance. It tells that in the Lord's human person "two have become one," that the synthesis of opposites has in Him become accomplished. In Him dwelt all the male and female fulness of both the Godhead and of humanity bodily; and so the Gospels present to us a personality that is sexless, yet that displays unitedly the attributes and virtues that, in separation, distinctify man and woman. He had "trampled upon the garment of shame," transmuting the terrestrial body (which He had so described) into a body celestial. With Him "the outside had become as the inside, and the male with the female, neither male nor female" but a bisexual whole. He is "Rabboni"—Perfect Master; Osiris Onnofris, the Justified One; and has entered into His Kingdom whence, giving forth perpetually the dual essences of His Body and Blood for uniting the broken sex-halves of humanity, He says "Be ye perfect, even as I am perfect!"

IV

That which was prototypally forthshown in the Ark of the Covenant, and, for our salvation and further example, fulfilled in the Lord's person, remains still to be accomplished in those who constitute His mystical Body. The Kingdom in its fulness, He said, cannot come to them, nor can He *manifest* Himself in them, unless it be so, whatsoever lesser graces He may grant them. The mystery, then, of which we speak becomes one of individual application; and it suffices not that we rest in bare though enraptured contemplation of what was wrought by the First-fruits of them that sleep in unconsciousness of the great verities. Significantly, then, the concluding book of the Scriptures, which is one of personal initiation into the Greater Mysteries, is also that in which—again, with consummate artistry—the biblical allusions to the Ark of the Covenant come to their full and symmetrical close and the end is joined to the beginning. The initial pages of Scripture

show us man's extrusion from Paradise, of which we are left with but the view of its Cherubim-guarded gates. The Mosaic and later records disclose how that truth and the mystery of human regeneration into a paradisaal condition was kept in the forefront of the mind of Jewry by the symbolic centrepiece of the Hebrew sanctuary. The Gospels relate how that which for centuries subsisted in symbolism in a temple made with hands passed into living, glorious reality in the temple of the Lord's body.

There remain the temples of our own bodies. There, at the centre and "holiest place of all," the Ark of Testimony still rests as surely as ever its symbolic counterpart rested in the *Sanctum Sanctorum* of Israel. And men know it not; the churches teach it not. It is hidden still behind double veils; a veil of corruptible flesh and a veil of reasoning mind that obscure the Shechinah beyond. Cloud is over the whole sanctuary, though there are those for whom that cloud is breaking. But the Apocalyptic writer knew it and, for our instruction, told of it when he says, and says of himself, that "the temple of God was opened in heaven (in his own spiritual consciousness) and *there* was seen, in His temple (the speaker's own organism), the Ark of His Covenant"; the ultimate Mercy-seat and place of manifestation of Him whose kingdom is within us; whose kingdom men are ever praying with their lips may come, but which comes not in the sense the Lord implied, because they know not what they ask, and pray misunderstandingly.

"When two shall be one." "Now," comments St Clement,¹ "two are one when we speak truth among ourselves and when, without hypocrisy, there shall in two bodies be one soul. And male with female, neither male nor female, meaneth that a brother beholding a sister shall nowise think of her as female nor shall she think of him as male." Even in this superficial exposition he is speaking cryptically and from inner knowledge of the ultimate mystery communicated under illumination or discerned in the schools of the

¹ Second Epistle, xii.

Secret Doctrine. Similarly, much must here be left unsaid, but something may be added.

The very significant tradition lingers that the loss of the Christ-child was due to the sexes being allocated separately in the Temple and to each parent having believed Him to be with the other; we know that they did not recover Him till they had sought Him sorrowing and had re-entered the Temple *together*. Is it not further written "Two are better than one because they have a reward for their labour"? Even the Father of all did not create the universe without the co-operation of another—Him "by whom all things were made," and who throughout nature perpetuates and perfects His work by means of dual bodies and pairs of complementary opposites. Great, then, as may be the measure of regeneration and spiritual stature achieved by individuals in separation, shall not the ultimate perfected transformation of man in Christ into the similitude of the Divine image be a conjoint work and not one wrought out in isolation? The annals of saintship, the records of the great mystics, reveal the attainments of the singly aspiring soul. The day may be at hand when they will declare the larger achievement of a joint enterprise. That which caused the extrusion of man from paradise involved the concerted action of a pair of beings; and, in correspondence, to two participants will the lost kingdom in its fulness be restored. But this is the mystery the flaming sword of the Cherubim still guards, though this will fall for those who in God's grace are called to a right understanding of the subject.

Some moralist has observed that when, in the courtesies of mundane life, a man and woman bow to one another, each is paying unconscious homage to that element of human personality which is lacking or repressed in the one and predominant in the other; in the very posture they form "the broken arcs" of what was designed to be, and is still destined to become, "the perfect round." But when, in the mystic life and the larger understanding that therewith comes,

there bend towards one another, like the adoring Cherubim whose "faces were turned the one towards the other" above the Mercy-seat, two who know past all denial that God has joined them together in spirit, in soul, and in understanding, their mutual act of reverence is as a betrothal preluding that supreme marriage in which, beyond any sense in which the superficial thought of the world interprets the words, they will indeed be made one flesh and become grafted into Christ's eternal Body of the self-same flesh in a union which none may part asunder.

In further similitude to the symbolic Cherubim, such ones must be "of gold, of beaten work"—sublimated and disciplined in their physical and mental parts after the laws of spiritual science. The Inner-Guard of Paradise admits none but candidates properly prepared and carrying no base metals upon them; and if the Ark be touched by the unclean hands of an Uzzah whose "oxen stumble"¹—that is, whose sensual nature is uncontrolled—the mission and purpose of the meekly brooding angelic lovers forthwith are changed and there flashes forth the deadly sword of flame. They will therefore approach the inward Ark in the Cherubim's spirit of blended love and wisdom; vested interiorly as priests unto God, and with "Holiness unto the Lord" upon their foreheads in token of fulness of understanding of what they do and of wholeness of dedication to His work. They will recall the hallows that rested in the basement of the Ark and how those encoffined symbols tell of a mystical death of that which is lower in man to the end that, unfettered from it, the higher part, like the Cherubim's uplifted pinions, may soar in the spirit and be as those of whom it was said "I bore you upon eagle's wings and brought you to Myself." And (to use now the words of the writer quoted earlier as one who left some well-founded intimations upon this subject two centuries ago) they will then "with humble awe and adoration, soaring on the wings of faith and love into the heaven of heavens and to the throne itself of the Divine Majesty,

¹ 1 Chron. xiii. 9.

contemplate there the nature of God *as Love in its eternally triumphant and vital act, which is the eternal generation of His Eternal Son*; and take in at least a glimpse of this highest of divine mysteries—the foundation of and spring of light into all others—which is in itself a glory transcending all that can be conceived of it.”

In this wise, for such, and for such only, “as being heirs together of the grace of life,”¹ may “the temple of God”—the perfected organism of man—be opened in the interior heaven of the soul, and *there* be seen the Ark of His testimony; and, two being made one in His image, they “will be like Him, for they will see Him as He is,” in a unity that is neither male nor female, but one comprising the qualities of both, and in completion and consummation of a creative design to advance which God once became man that finally man might become as God.

“In the beginning” God created the larger world and designed man after His own male-female image. We know that that design became abortive through man’s own act, and that all of human kind became involved in the result. We know that from the foundation of the world, in the eternal counsel of God and by the holy sacrifice and condescension of the Lord Christ, that act has been repaired; but also that that reparation, although a fact of eternity, awaits its outworking in the world of time, and that its fulfilment depends upon the co-operation of the will of man. But, that will consenting, how shall man attain the fulness of the Divine image unless and until he also become the creator of a world—the lesser world which is himself? In virtue of which mystery of human co-operation with God in the cosmic scheme, a singer² of our own day, who, ere his passing hence, glimpsed the morning-redness of a larger truth now breaking upon the world, has apostrophised man thus:—

¹ 1 Pet. iii. 7.

² Francis Thompson.

Great arm-fellow of God;
To the ancestral clod
 Kin,
And to Cherubin;
Bread predilectedly
O’ the worm and Deity;
 Hark!
O God’s clay-sealed Ark,
To praise that fits thee; clear
To the ear within the ear,
 But dense
To clay-sealed sense.